



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

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HIV REPORTING REQUIREMENT WILL INCREASE EARLY DETECTION AND TREATMENT

With the goal of increasing early detection and treatment of HIV infection, health care providers and laboratories will be required to report all new cases of HIV infection to the New York State Health Department, effective June 1, 2000. Physicians and public health workers will also begin assisting in the notification of sexual and needle-sharing partners of HIV-infected patients, to alert them to the importance of being tested. The identity of patients will not be revealed during this notification.

Monroe County health officials and representatives from several community health agencies were on-hand at a news conference held at AIDS Rochester to announce implementation of this important public health initiative. State legislation passed in 1998 required the establishment of this new activity.

People typically live for many years with HIV prior to developing AIDS. "Earlier diagnosis of the infection is critical to assure quick initiation of newer drug regimens that have proven to be very effective in delaying the onset of AIDS," said Dr. William Valenti, founding medical director of Community Health Network and Clinical Associate Professor at UR Medical Center.

"Strict state and federal laws will be adhered to when notifying people that may have been exposed to the HIV virus," said Monroe County Health Director Dr. Andrew Doniger. A physician or public health worker will not reveal the HIV-infected person's identity. Such confidential information has been routinely collected about AIDS cases since the early 1980s. There has never been an unauthorized release of personal information.

There are several options available for notification of partners ranging from having public health workers make the notification to having the HIV-infected person do it him or herself. The patient, in consultation with his or her physician, will choose the method used to notify possible contacts.

State and county health officials have been communicating this information to doctors over the past several weeks via mailings. A special training will be conducted to better inform doctors of this new requirement. The training will occur on June 15 at the Marriot Thruway Hotel, 5257 West Henrietta Road.

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For More Information,

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